

# L I B E R

A Newsletter for the Friends of Special Collections, Bailey/Howe Library, University of Vermont

Number 41

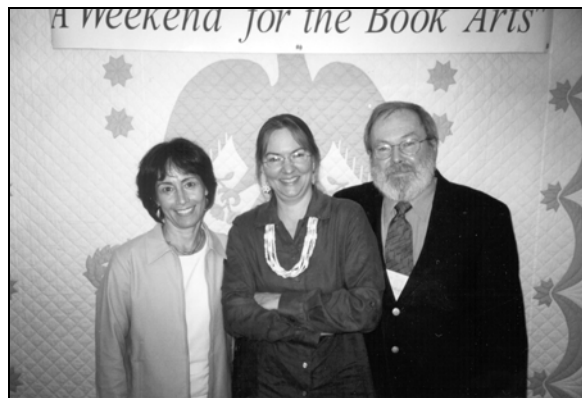
Winter, 2005

## Collecting Artists' Books

*In October, Special Collections director Connell Gallagher spoke at the Oak Knoll Fest, an international celebration of the book arts. His presentation was part of a panel discussion called "Instructions for Assembly: Building a Book Arts Collection." The moderator was Tim D. Murray, Librarian and Head of Special Collections at the University of Delaware Library, and the other panelists included Rebecca Johnson Melvin from the University of Delaware and Ruth Rogers from Wellesley College. We are happy to share Gallagher's remarks.*

The University of Vermont Library has been interested in fine printing since it received the library of Charles Whittingham, the great nineteenth-century English printer, in the 1890s as a gift from Benjamin Franklin Stevens. My predecessor, John Buechler, the first special collections librarian, developed this interest. He focused on private presses, acquired books by some of the great modern printers, and established standing orders to a number of modern fine presses, including Perishable, Bird & Bull, the Iowa presses, and Vermont's own Janus Press. In the 1970s and more so in the 1980s, there was a shift in the kinds of books being made by contemporary private presses that resulted in an explosion of artists' books, and this continued in the 1990s, led primarily by women. The changing work of Claire Van Vliet, from illustrated fine printing to true artists' books, that is, books with pulp paintings, sculptural books and books with elaborate non-adhesive bindings, was our inspiration. She remains an advisor to our program. She turned me on to artists' books in 1975. I built a personal collection of her work, and I have never looked back. We have over 100 of her books in the collection at Vermont.

The library started to collect artists' books in the 1980s, and we have over 1,500 items in the collection now. Book artists began to visit in the late 1980s to show their work. I still remember our excitement when Ron King of Circle Press came through, and we overspent our small acquisitions budget on beautiful and interesting work. There is an embarrassment of riches out there now, but none of us can collect everything. Joanna Drucker defines artists' books in her *Century of Artists' Books*, and she mentions their diversity from street literature and political books to fine printing, illustrated books and elaborate books that are made by hand. We specialize in the latter, but we continue to acquire fine printing, illustrated books



*Ruth Rogers, Rebecca Johnson Melvin, and Connell Gallagher at Oak Knoll Fest.*

and an occasional *livre d'artiste*. The major determinant for what we collect is budget, though lack of space is becoming an issue as well. I spend approximately 30% of my time fundraising for all aspects of our Special Collections—Vermontiana, University Archives, Historical Manuscripts, Preservation, Rare Books and the Book Arts Collection—and I have other administrative and teaching responsibilities, so I have less time to carefully select new books for the collection. It is extremely rare for us to buy a book that costs \$5,000 or more, and we purchase few in the \$3,000 range. We do not have either the Pennyroyal Bible or the Arion Press Bible, though both are beautiful books. We do have a Bruce Rogers Bible. A few years ago we bought a large William Blake collection that appeared locally thanks to funds made available by the UVM English department. Blake was the first true book artist, that is, he wrote the text, made the illustrations, and printed his own books.

*Continued on next page*

*Collecting Artists' Books, continued*

I purchase artists' books in a number of ways. We have about ten standing orders, I contact book artists directly, I buy a number of new books from visiting dealers, I check dealer's catalogs, and occasionally buy books on the Internet. I enjoy having dealers and book artists visit, for I get to see a lot of books at the same time. I like to be able to spend time with an expensive book before I buy it, and both artists and dealers are willing to leave books with me on approval or send them to me. I usually buy these because I fall in love with them over time, but I have sent books back on occasion. One dealer permits customers to put some books on "reserve" until the following year. They let us know if the book is selling out and then we need to make a decision. Recently we decided to purchase a group of books by Susan E. King because her work influenced Julie Chen, a book artist we collect, and because the work looked interesting from photographs I had seen. It took me a while to locate Susan, but I did and was able to purchase a number of books directly from her. I filled in a few holes by searching the Internet.

I decide to buy a book for the following subjective reasons:

1. I like it because it is beautiful, because it is well made and will hold up in a library setting, and because the book "works," that is, all of the parts contribute to the impact of the whole. The book should make sense.

2. The book is different and adds something to our collection. Sometimes it is just an interesting gimmick, but well done. Heather Weston comes to mind. Sometimes the artist is pushing the concept of the book in a new direction. I ask myself how I can use the book in a class, and how I can use it in an exhibit. New subjects are important as well. We have acquired a number of 9/11 books because they document the way artists view this seminal tragedy.

3. I like the artists. I like what they have to say and how they say it. Once I am committed to an artist by setting up a standing order, I don't have to like every book she/he makes. Artists need to do what they need to do, and I need to support this. I didn't care for the Janus Press *Batterers* when it came in, too bloody, but I studied it over time, reviewed it for the journal *Hand Papermaking*, and it grew on me. It is a great exhibit item because of the rich color, it is well made, and everything about it makes sense. Students love it too.

4. We have an interest in acquiring multicultural books by ALANA artists because our collection is weak in this area and because my dean has a fund to support this.

5. Vermont book artists. There was a point when I thought I would try to limit our collection to New England and really collect in

depth, but I realized that this would diminish what I hoped the collection would be. I wanted to be able to buy the best books from California, New York and the Midwest as well as those from New England.

6. We have a great collection of illustrated editions of the *Metamorphoses*, so I seek all illustrated books and artists' books that deal with this work, and we have begun to collect Ovid's other books. In addition, I like illustrated versions of fine literature so I buy broadly in this area. I have thought about building a good collection of illustrated editions of Shakespeare and the Bible, huge areas, but I have made some progress thanks to help from our English department. They help us to purchase other interesting works in English and American literature.

A final word about standing orders: discounts of 20% to 30% help stretch our budget. Artists often send us free ephemera if we have a standing order and this is useful for exhibits. Having a critical mass of work by a single artist is handy for doing exhibits and classes. I often focus on the work of a single artist and then draw comparisons with the work of other artists. Students seem to like to see a lot of work by a single person. Artists' books are the most heavily used collection within our Rare Book Collections.

So where does this leave us? Our collection is eclectic. We collect a wide variety of book artists and a wide variety of books. We continue to develop the setting around these, for we are interested in the history of the book in the broad sense—papermaking, binding, typography, illustration, and book structures. The only thing holding us back is budget, and we are working on that.



*Heather Weston's Read: Past, Tense. (Photo courtesy Vamp and Tramp.)*

## Book Auction To Fund Gertrude R. Mallary Endowment

Proceeds from the November 6, 2004, Special Collections book auction will fund a new endowment in honor of Gertrude R. Mallary, whose Vermontiana collection provided the bulk of the auction's 440 lots. Seventy-five bidders spent close to a quarter-million dollars at the auction, which was conducted by Hinesburg auctioneer William L. Parkinson in UVM's Waterman Building. The new endowment will be used to purchase historical materials and to fund special projects, such as the arrangement and description of important manuscript collections.

All of the Vermont imprints were duplicates of items held by Special Collections. The Americana titles were either duplicates or items that fell outside the Department's collecting scope. The quality and scarcity of the items offered in the auction attracted some of the leading dealers and collectors in the United States and Canada. Their willingness to pay top dollar for rare Vermontiana and Americana titles testifies to the enduring appeal of documents embodying the heritage of our state and nation. The highest prices paid were \$20,500 each for the 1779 edition of *A Narrative of Colonel Ethan Allen's Captivity* and the 1778 *Constitution of the State of Vermont*. The same editions, in slightly less pristine condition, brought \$5,500 and \$6,250 respectively in the Department's 1991 benefit auction. Curiously, though the "high-end" items brought excellent prices, some of the old stand-bys of book auctions did not fare as well. The five volumes of Abby Hemenway's *Vermont Historical Gazetteer* sold for a total of \$600, while a set of the 1792-1793 edition of Jeremy Belknap's *History of New-Hampshire* (with some minor

flaws) went for only \$100. A complete set of the *Gazetteer* sold for a total of \$1,475 in the Department's 1994 auction. But these were exceptions in an auction characterized by highly motivated buyers. All in all, it seems that the excellent quality of the material contributed substantially to the high prices realized.

This was the fourth such auction held by Special Collections. The first, in 1987, brought in \$30,000. Repeats in 1991 and 1994 yielded \$108,000 and \$60,000 respectively. The revenues generated by these auctions have all gone into endowment funds for the purchase of books, manuscripts, and other historical materials. The Gertrude R. Mallary Endowment will add significantly to Special Collections' acquisition budget, but it will also be flexible enough to allow the Department to hire part-time help for special projects, and thus add value to our most important research collections.

Special Collections is grateful to Mrs. Mallary's family for their longstanding support for our mission, and particularly for making this auction possible. The Mallary Endowment will stand as a monument to Mrs. Mallary's devotion to Vermont history and her passion for collecting, which will benefit generations of Vermont scholars.

Special Collections staff members continue to work through the 6,000 titles in the Mallary collection, adding titles that the Wilbur collection lacks and setting aside duplicates for the Vermont Historical Society and the American Antiquarian Society. Will there be another auction? Enough good material remains for a decent auction, but for now we'll try to catch up on other important work.

### In Print Recent Books and Articles by Authors Who Used Materials in Special Collections

Bedini, Silvio A. "John Johnson (1771-1842) Surveyor, Millwright, Builder, Architect and Civil Engineer." *The American Surveyor* 1:4 (July-August 2004). **John Johnson Papers.**

Bonfield, Lynn A. "The Work Journal of Albert Bickford, Mid-Nineteenth-Century Vermont Farmer, Cooper, and Carpenter." *Vermont History* 72 (Summer/Fall 2004), 113-59. **Isaac N. Watts Papers.**

Bugbee, Sylvia J. *An Officer and a Lady: the World War II Letters of Lt. Col. Betty Bandel, Women's Army Corps*. Hanover: University Press of New England, 2004. **Betty Bandel Papers.**

Hand, Samuel B. and Stephen C. Terry. *The Essential Aiken: A Life in Public Service*. Burlington: University of Vermont, 2004. **George D. Aiken Papers.**

Marshall, Jeffrey D. "'Butler's Rotten Breath of Calumny': Major General Benjamin F. Butler and the Censure of the Seventh Vermont Infantry." *Vermont History* 72 (Winter/Spring 2004), 23-54. **John W. Phelps Papers, William C. Holbrook Papers.**

Miller, Gretchen Howe. *A Young Man of Promise: The Flower of the Family: James Marsh Read, 1833-1865*. Bloomington, Ind.: Author House, 2004. **James Marsh Read Papers** (donated to Special Collections subsequent to publication).

Winter, Kari J., ed. *The Blind African Slave, or, Memoirs of Boyrereau Brinch, Nicknamed Jeffrey Brace*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2004. **Samuel C. Crafts Family Papers; original copy of The Blind African Slave (1810).**

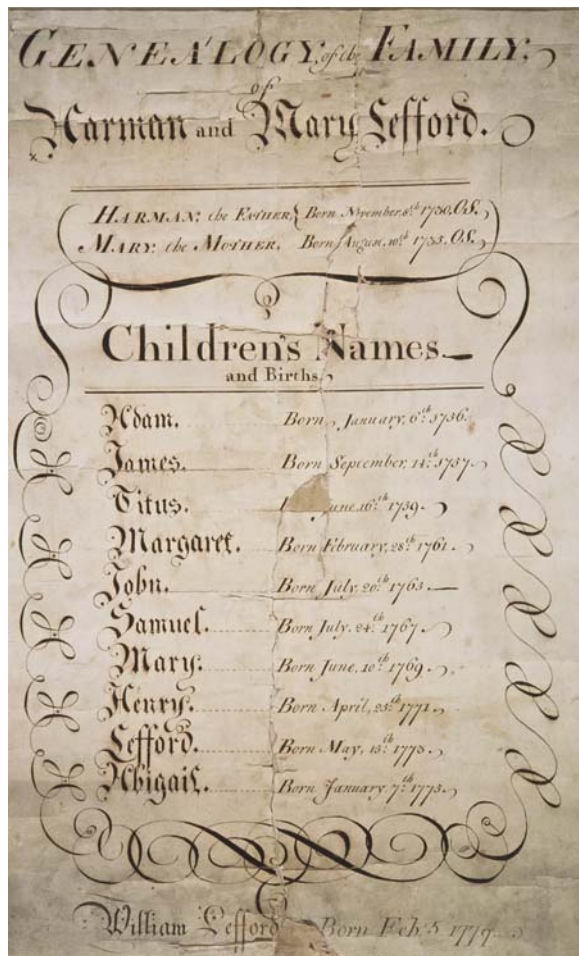
## A Relationship to Preserve

Special Collections has a longstanding relationship with the Northeast Document Conservation Center in Andover, Massachusetts. For many years a member of the Bailey/Howe staff has served on NEDCC's Advisory Board in order to exchange information on conservation issues with NEDCC staff. We have also been a steady customer of NEDCC's services, including special binding jobs, paper and photographic conservation, and consulting. At any given time Special Collections has some project in the works at NEDCC. Currently, eight Vermont maps that we acquired in the 2003 auction of Monsignor John McSweeney's collection are being treated for mostly minor repairs and cleaning—work that is beyond the skills and facilities available locally.

The Northeast Document Conservation Center, founded in 1973, is the largest non-profit center of its kind in the United States, and one of the finest in the world. The Center specializes in the preservation of paper-based materials, including books, documents, photographs, parchment, wallpaper, and works of art on paper. Its services are employed by some of the leading libraries and museums in the country. NEDCC also has a foreign

policy: its conservators have traveled to Africa, Russia, Mongolia, and South America to consult and train local conservators in the latest techniques. At the same time, the Conservation Center has frequently hosted exchanges with conservators from many corners of the globe. NEDCC staff are prepared to respond to disasters that threaten historical treasures, and also to provide consultation in disaster prevention.

Although Bailey/Howe Library has a relatively small budget for conservation work, we manage to keep something always in the pipeline at NEDCC. Our backlog of materials requiring treatment is large, and it is necessary to make careful decisions about the most critical needs. Usually, the items in greatest needs are fragile or highly acidic documents. NEDCC is sensitive to the particular needs of each institution and can often recommend a conservation plan that involves the least amount of treatment for the best possible result. It is a decision that requires not only the professional judgment of the conservator but also the appraisal skills of the curator. Our excellent relationship with NEDCC staff makes such decisions an easy matter.



### Lefford Genealogy received

J. Brooks Buxton recently donated a *Genealogy of the Harman and Mary Lefford Family*. Harmon Lefford was one of the original proprietors of the Town of Burlington. The genealogy was handwritten in beautiful calligraphy by William Lefford, who was born in 1789. The piece is beautifully mounted and framed in an early nineteenth-century wave design. It will make a remarkable showpiece for our Vermont collection.

## Writing about Baseball

This past year, several boxes were added to the Howard Frank Mosher Papers, one of our important literary collections. Literary manuscript collections document the writing process, in Mosher's case on many pages of handwritten yellow legal-sized paper. These collections also document business details, promotional tours, personal and professional relationships, and they shed light on the impact of the written word. Special Collections is home to some wonderful literary collections, including the papers of Tim Brookes, David Budbill, Hayden Carruth, Sarah Cleghorn, Walter Coates, Dorothy Canfield Fisher, Walter Hard, James Hayford, Zephine Humphrey, John Masefield, Theodora Peck, Mari Tomasi, William H. Upton, and the Vermont League of Writers.

A great deal of the new Mosher material is related to his most recent novel, *Waiting for Teddy Williams*. When published, the book featured two very unlikely details: a baseball player named Ethan Allen and a World Series won by the Boston Red Sox. In October, one of those details came true, to the delight of Red Sox fans everywhere, and it was not the bit about Ethan Allen. Is Mosher responsible for breaking the dreaded 'Curse of the Bambino'? We may never know for certain. However, the recent additions to the Mosher papers demonstrate that this book struck a chord with a great many readers around the country, as the following quotations from letters sent to Mosher attest.



"In the early 60's, when I was 13, our family found themselves in Boston due to my father's company transfer. He became the Sales Promotion Director for the Northeast territory for Sears. His office in the Sears Tower was 2 blocks from Fenway Park, home of the famous Red Sox team. The legendary Ted Williams had just retired and my father helped to recruit him for product endorsements at Sears. He garnered a season's pass to the games and I spent afternoons racing from school to the ball park, eating hot dogs and cracker jacks, following Kurt Gowdy's play-by-play announcements all season long. I even met Teddy Ballgame once in my father's office and still have the autographed baseball he gave me and an unchewed stick of Juicy Fruit gum!"

"This week I simultaneously listened to the World Series and read *Waiting for Teddy Williams*. At times the radio faded in and out, and I dozed (after too many late nights of baseball), only to awaken to the uncertainty of reality and fiction. Once I was reading about walking a batter with runners on 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> to try for the double play as it was happening in real life. I got to the final game in the book during the 3<sup>rd</sup> game of the real 'serious', and didn't want to know what was going to happen next! The whole experience brought me to that wonderful place between reality and imagination that so many of your books encompass. This particular book also reconnected me with my dad, who was one year old when the Sox last won, and unfortunately didn't get to see this series. Thanks for all of your wonderful writing."

"Your book's concerns with small-town life and fathers and sons and the connective tissue of baseball resonated strongly with me. My father grew up on an Iowa farm during the late 1920's and the 1930's. His large family would gather around the radio and listen to the World Series every year, and in those days the Cards and the Cubs were occasional participants. Of course, everyone rooted for the "locals," but my dad, the next-to-youngest, noticed that the AL representative always seemed to be the Yankees, and they always seemed to win. He decided that the Yankees were his team, and he has maintained an unremitting devotion to them to this day. I have always felt that his selection of the Yankees said something about his desire to be an individual, to make his mark in the world in some unique way, and his recognition that the world was a bigger place than he could see from his particular vantage point. My guess is that these sorts of desires and recognitions were not much prized among Depression-era German farmers in Iowa. Yet there he was, a little farm boy declaring that the Yankees were his team. It may be the most surprising decision he ever made."



Contributed by Chris Burns

## The James Marsh Read Papers

The James Marsh Read Papers, one of the department's most significant new manuscript collections in recent years, arrived at the end of 2004, the gift of Gretchen Howe Miller of Orinda, California. The collection documents the life of a Vermont-born explorer and Civil War soldier, and provides a great deal of insight on the social and business life of a distinguished Vermont family.

James Read seemed destined for great things. His mother, Emily Marsh Read, was the sister of UVM president James Marsh and cousin of scholar and diplomat George Perkins Marsh. His father, David Read, was a lawyer, farmer, and entrepreneur who attempted (with limited success) to market Colchester marble to builders in New York and Washington. David Read's uncle, Nathan Read, had patented many steam locomotion inventions, and much of his interest in science and industry was passed on to later generations. James graduated from UVM in 1853 and soon began looking for work as a journalist. While marginally employed with a New York City newspaper in 1855 he was offered an opportunity to join a U.S. Army expedition, as a civilian clerk, to the American Southwest. The purpose of the expedition was to determine whether water could be supplied by artesian wells in the arid territory between Texas and California sufficient to meet the needs of a transcontinental railroad. James eagerly accepted the offer. For the next year and a half he took notes and kept records for the expedition, in the process learning much about surveying, astronomy, and geology. James was an avid botanist as well. His letters contain many references to plants he encountered and he brought or sent home numerous specimens carefully pressed.

The expedition failed to find adequate sources of water, but James kept busy for some time writing up its findings for publication. He accompanied a follow-up expedition in 1857-58, but left after several months when his services were no longer needed.

When the Civil War broke out in April 1861, James quickly enlisted in the First Vermont Infantry Regiment. His experience as a civilian employee in a military expedition prepared him for the hardships of camp life. He also proved to be a perceptive observer of military and political events. His descriptions of the inept Union assault on Big Bethel in June and the much bigger disaster at Bull Run in July showed an unusual sense for military tactics.

The First Vermont mustered out of service in August 1861, and James waited a year before re-enlisting in the Tenth Vermont Infantry. He was appointed sergeant in Company D, the same company in which his younger brother Ogden enlisted as a private. James soon gained attention for his clerking skills. He spent much of his enlistment as a clerk, first with the Regimental Commissary, and then with the Third Division Adjutant General's office. Although this duty kept him out of harm's way most of the time, he nevertheless sent detailed

descriptions of the marches, battlefields, and personalities he encountered. The Tenth was not engaged in battle until November 1863, at the battle of Orange Grove. James stayed with Division staff well behind the action, but not out of danger: shells and grapeshot kicked up dirt in front of his horse and bullets clipped branches directly over his head.

James generally wrote little about his own participation in battles once the Tenth switched from picket duty in Washington's defenses to active combat in the Spring, 1864 campaign. In the midst of that bloody series of battles he wrote, "We are dirty, ragged, half the time hungry & look about as much like dress parade soldiers as a chimney sweep does like a dandy, but everyone is cheerful, confident of success & ready for anything." At Cold Harbor, on June 2, the Tenth broke through the enemy lines and captured many enemy soldiers, but lost dozens of its own men, killed and wounded. James, meanwhile, received a commission as Second Lieutenant. His brother Ogden had recently been commissioned Captain in a regiment of Colored Troops.

When the Tenth's adjutant was promoted to major early in 1865, James Read was the natural successor. He had abundant experience as a clerk and a deep knowledge of the workings of the military bureaucracy. Normally, the adjutant did not participate in combat. Why James was on the battlefield in the final assault on Petersburg, on April 2, is unclear. Perhaps he sensed that history was about to be made and wanted to be a part of the action. It was an unfortunate decision: he was shot through the right foot, necessitating its amputation. Although he wrote home the next day that he was doing well and hoped to be home soon, by some means (perhaps a blood clot) the wound proved fatal. James Marsh Read died on June 5, and his embalmed body was soon sent home to Burlington.

The Read Papers provide a wonderful view of a distinguished Vermont family. Gretchen Miller was so intrigued by the collection, which came to her through family connections, that she edited and published Read's letters before donating them. Her book, *A Young Man of Promise, the Flower of the Family: James Marsh Read, 1833-1865*, was published in September 2004. At the end of that month Gretchen gave a talk on James Marsh Read in Special Collections, where she and her book were well received. The Read papers complement our James Marsh and George Perkins Marsh collections, and make a welcome addition to our Civil War research collection.

*Contributed by Jeffrey Marshall*

## Friends of Special Collections at UVM

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## George Gregory Smith and Mark Twain

George Gregory Smith, of the prominent Smith family of St. Albans, was living in a villa in Florence, Italy, in 1903 when he received unexpected but exciting news: Mark Twain and his wife and two daughters were arriving that fall to spend the winter. Twain's wife, Olivia (Livy) had been in frail health for years and it was hoped that a winter in Florence's salubrious climate would revivify her spirits. As it turned out, Florence's climate was not as salubrious as reported and the decline in Livy's health continued, leading to her death on June 4, 1904.

For the seven months that Twain and his family lived in Florence, Smith, who with his wife formed a close friendship with them, reported their doings to his mother, brother, and sister back in St. Albans. His letters have been preserved and provide a vivid picture of America's greatest humorist. Copies are in Special Collections, while the originals are in the St. Albans Historical Museum in St. Albans. Excerpts from the letters concerning Twain have been transcribed and annotated for the first time by retired UVM English professor Harry Orth and will appear in a forthcoming issue of the *Mark Twain Journal*.

Smith was much taken with the boisterous, highly entertaining Twain. "His conversation is exactly like his books," he reports. In another letter he says, "His mind is as whimsical and unstable as the wind. . . he is a coherent mass of contradictions & always always charming." "His eyes twinkle with merriment and delight," he says elsewhere. For Thanksgiving, Smith had fourteen at table,

including Twain and his daughter Jean (Livy was too ill to come). "Mark Twain was in great form and kept his end of the table in a roar," Smith reports delightedly.

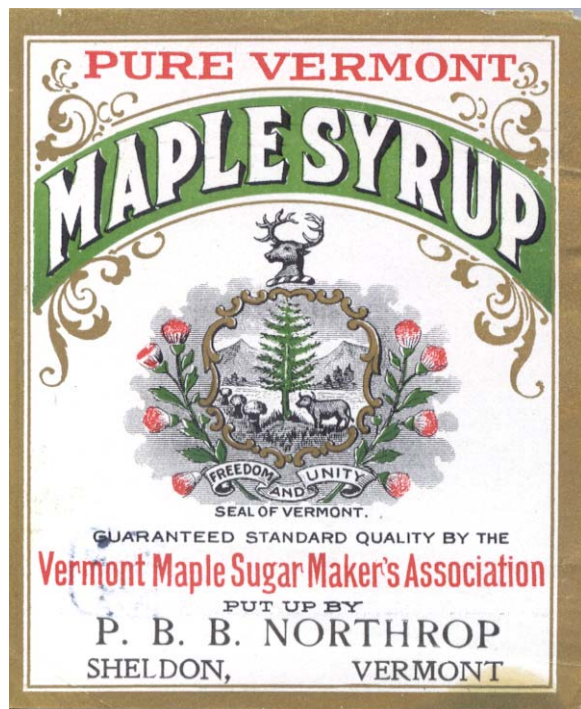
In contrast to these lighthearted descriptions are Smith's comments on Livy. "Mrs. Clemens is very much of an invalid," he says in several letters, noting, however, that she is "a beautiful character." By February he reports, "She may die at any time," and in May "She does not leave her bed now & only sees her husband twice a day for 5 minutes at a time."

The day after Livy died, Smith and his wife drove over to Twain's villa and heard the sad story of her last moments in an extended account that parallels very closely the one that Twain gives in his Autobiography--how he had been heartened in his last short visit with her by signs of vitality, had gone out of her room and played "Negro hymns and melodies" on the piano, then had returned to say good night only to find Livy had died moments earlier. "It was without any exception whatever the most beautiful funeral discourse I have ever listened to," writes Smith in a spirit of great sympathy.

The excerpts from Smith's letters, unknown to students and devotees of Twain until now, thus provide a vivid and touching account of the great humorist's personality and the events surrounding the decline and final months of the love of his life, his wife of thirty-four years, Olivia Langdon Clemens.



Special Collections  
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*One of the maple syrup labels from the Vermont ephemera collection. This one dates from sometime before 1922.*

### **UVM Sugar-on-Snow Party April 19, 2005**

The University of Vermont invites one and all to the UVM Sugar-on-Snow Party to celebrate the Vermont tradition of maple sugaring with a taste of the year's first harvest. The UVM party dates back to the joint bicentennial of the university and Vermont statehood in 1991. That year, the Vermont Maple Industry Council's Maple History Committee revived the Dean Hills Sugar Party that began in the 1930s and was fondly remembered by UVM and the surrounding community. Like its predecessor, this annual event seeks to highlight the importance of maple and maple research to the economy of the state and its distinctive way of life.

Connell Gallagher and Ingrid Bower from Special Collections serve on the Maple History Committee and help organize the annual sugar party. Special Collections also holds important material for maple research.

From 11:30 am – 3 pm on April 19, you are invited to sample sugar-on-snow, compliments of the UVM Proctor Maple Research Center, and listen to the music of Atlantic Crossing at the Bailey/Howe Library portico. Visit the library to see the new film about Vermont maple, *Voices from the Sugarwoods*.